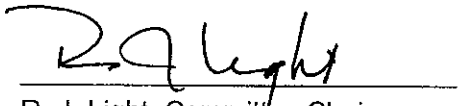


BC BUILDING CODE INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE
AIBC, APEGBC, BOABC, POABC

File No: 06-0044	INTERPRETATION	Page 1 of 1
Interpretation Date:	November 18, 2008	
Building Code Edition:	BC Building Code 2006	
Subject:	Maximum size of opening at open stair risers	
Keywords:	Stair risers, maximum openings size	
Building Code Reference(s):	3.3.1.14.(1), 3.3.1.18.(2), 3.4.6.5.(5), 3.4.6.7.(1)(c), 9.8.8.5.(1), A-9.8.8.5.(3)	
Question:		
<p>The Building Code permits risers for certain types of stairs to be open. Depending on the specific use and occupancy where the stair is located, the risers can have a height in the range of 125 – 200mm.</p> <p>Are the restrictions for openings to prevent passage of a 100mm spherical object such as required for stair guards, also required to be applied to open risers?</p>		
Interpretation:		
<p>No.</p> <p>The restrictions for openings to prevent passage of a 100mm spherical object such as for stair guards, are not intended to be also applied to open risers, where they are permitted.</p> <p>Stairs due to their nature have inherent risks. Open risers are considered to be an acceptable risk for certain stairs and do not compromise evacuation and convenience usage for those situations.</p> <p>Open risers are different from the guards at the sides of stairs. Guards are intended to address lateral fall hazards at the sides of stairs and the ergonomics of stair usage. Guards are also regulated to prevent entrapment such as small children whose heads can squeeze through openings in the range of 100-200mm (see A-9.8.8.5.(3) commentary). However, open risers are not subject to such safety criteria specifically intended for guards at the sides of stairs.</p> <p>Note that the successive triangular spaces at the sides of stairs between the treads, risers and the sloping line connecting the nosings, are subject to the restrictions for openings to prevent passage of a 100mm spherical object such as for stair guards – see previous BCBCIC interpretation number 98-0014.</p> <p>Refer also to previous BCBCIC interpretation number 06-0002 addressing situations where open risers are permitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- stairs not used as exits in Part 3 buildings, and- all stairs in Part 9 buildings.		
 R. J. Light, Committee Chair		
<small>The views expressed are the consensus of the joint committee of AIBC, APEGBC, BOABC, and POABC, which form the BC Building Code Interpretation Committee. The purpose of the committee is to encourage uniform province wide interpretation of the BC Building Code. These views should not be considered as the official interpretation of legislated requirements based on the BC Building Code, as final responsibility for an interpretation rests with the local Authority Having Jurisdiction. The views of the joint committee should not be construed as legal advice.</small>		